

# Sustainable Funding for Conservation of Iowa's Natural Resources Meeting Summary

## MCCB/Grimes Farm Conservation Center – Marshalltown, IA November 01, 2006

Committee members present:

Mark	Ackelson		Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
Dan	Cohen		IACCB
Barbara	Finch		Iowa Farm Bureau
Rich	Leopold		Iowa Environmental Council
Lola	Lopes		The Nature Conservancy
Pauline	Novotny		Izaak Walton League of Iowa
Marvin	Shirley		Farmers Union
Ken	Tow		Secretary of Agriculture
Dave	Van Waus		Pheasants Forever
Pam	Mackey-Taylor	For Jane Clark	Sierra Club
Diane	Ford-Shivvers	For Jeff Vonk	IA DNR - facilitator
Henry	Rayhons		Iowa House of Representatives-Republican
Tammi	Kircher		Ducks Unlimited
Deb	Ryun		Conservation Districts of Iowa
John	Whitaker		IA House of Representatives-Democrat
Owen	Shunkwiler		Iowa Renewable Fuels Association

Committee member(s) absent:

Dick	Dearden		IA Senate-Democrat
Mary	Lundby		IA Senate-Republican

Committee Support Staff

Diane	Ford-Shivvers	IA DNR Legislative Liaison / SF Support
Doug	Harr	IA DNR Program Coordinator/SF Facilitator
Kim	Rasler	IA DNR / SF Support
Peter	Fritzell	IA DNR / SF Support
Jim	Zohrer	IA DNR / SF Support

Public present:

Deb	Kozel	LSA
Angela	Grover	The Nature Conservancy
Mary	Braun	House Democratic Staff
Scott	Scheidel	IA UST Fund-Administrator
Duane	Sand	INHF
Tom	Holm	Izaak Walton League-National Director (lobbyist)
Harry	Graves	(Citizen)

## **Welcome, Introductions, Opening Remarks – Diane Ford-Shivvers / Doug Harr**

Diane Ford-Shivvers, representing Ken Herring, greeted the committee and gave Ken's regrets for being out today reporting he was chosen for a select group with the National Conservation Leaders Association. His project for the study he is working on for this group is related to sustainable funding.

Public present were acknowledged. Deb Ryun will be representing Conservation Districts of Iowa and, for today, Pam Mackey-Taylor will be representing the Sierra Club for Jane Clark.

## **Summary of 10/11/06 meeting and review 11/01/06 agenda - Doug Harr**

The 10/11/06 meeting summary and status of tasks were reviewed:

- \* SF Funding Subcommittee suggested updates to the Funding Vehicles/Funding Needs table
  - LCPP recommendation changed to identify 5 million to NGOs
  - IDALS recommendation changed to reflect discussion to add \$5 million to improve livestock agriculture
  - Trails recommendation changed to note general leveraging
- \* The 4 funding mechanisms identified on 10/11/06 were reiterated and noted that these would be relayed to the survey contractor for direction in polling.
- \* Funding Vehicle / Funding Needs table still a work in progress re text for IDNR and IDALS.

Doug reported that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is excited about what Iowa is doing regarding sustainable funding and they want to support our effort. They believe we have a chance of this being successful in this endeavor.

Dan Cohen clarified information presented at the 10/11/06 meeting regarding Trails money leveraging Federal dollars. Federal Enhancement grants normally provide Iowa with \$2-3 million annually. The \$80 million mentioned on 10/11/06 was not an annual cost share amount.

## **Public Survey: Update/status of survey and bid process – Doug Harr / Peter Fritzell**

Doug presented the process implemented on the selection of a firm to survey Iowans Willingness to Pay. An RFP (Request for Proposal) was posted noting the requirements and timeline needed to complete the survey. 7 firms responded, which included 3 companies from Iowa. After the scoring team evaluated the proposals, Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates (FMMA) was chosen at a cost of \$31,500 to develop, administer, and analyze the mandated survey. The Natural Resource Commission will need to approve this bid, which is on their 11/09/06 agenda for review. If approved, FMMA is scheduled to provide a preliminary report mid-December with the final report due before 12/25/06.

### **Committee Comments/Questions:**

The committee expressed their need and desire to see the survey questions before they are put forth to the public and would like input on what the questions are. It was determined the Polling/Survey Subcommittee should review the questions and provide input before the survey begins. Afterward, the full committee would like an email to see what questions are being asked.

It was noted that some of the committee members are being asked what questions are going to be on the survey. Since the professionals have not created the questions to answer that, Angela Grover suggested they ask the person what question would they like to see on the questionnaire and get their feedback on it.

### **Report: Preliminary Work – Jim Zohrer**

Jim Zohrer presented the status of the report and the upcoming needs. He explained the process and elements needed for the report, the deadlines to complete aspects of the report, and that it would be beneficial to work to have the report completed toward the end of December to give support staff time to have it printed.

Jim requested a Report Preparation Subcommittee with legislator representation on the committee to assist him with preliminary report data. Volunteers for the subcommittee were: Mark Ackelson, Duane Sand, Tammi Kircher, Representative John Whitaker, and Deb Kozel.

Once the report is written, the subcommittee will review it and then it will be presented to the full committee for their input and approval before finalization.

### **Committee Comments/Questions:**

Rich Leopold recommended the notes and meeting summaries already prepared be used as a resource and to have Kim Rasler a part of the report creation process.

Representative Whitaker recommended an electronic version be created, as well as providing a summary for the legislators review.

### **Report on Funding Needs/Funding Vehicles and Natural Resource Categories - SF Funding Subcommittee** (Dan Cohen, Rich Leopold, Jim Obradovich, Ken Tow, Ken Herring)

The subcommittee met on 10/25/06. Rich Leopold shared the subcommittee's charge of:

- ...identifying specifics relating to Funding Vehicles
- ... tying funding vehicles to the 3 natural resource categories

The subcommittee deliberated format options in identifying specifics and tying the vehicles to the natural resource categories, as well as providing language ideas in preparation for public consumption and legislative presentation. To provide direction, clarification was made to the LCPP recommendation (noted that the upgrade of \$5 million was for NGOs versus Loess Hills only) and IDALS recommendation (note that the upgrade of \$5 million was directed to livestock agriculture). It was also identified that LCPP funding needs to include three categories instead of the two noted in the original table drafted: infrastructure, land management, and environmental education.

The idea of informing and engaging the public in Iowa's conservation, environmental, and recreational needs and issues was discussed. This enlightening and opportunity to provide connection between citizens and Iowa's valuable assets are vital to the sustainability of funding, let alone sustainability of the resources.

It was agreed the subcommittee would begin to work from the natural resource categories and identify aspects affected by sustainable funding and which vehicle(s) would achieve that. It was determined there would be some crossover in vehicles meeting the needs of the resource. The subcommittee chose to breakdown the programs and benefits of the natural resource categories to be able to tie them to funding vehicles. The subcommittee focused on answering the following questions: What is sustainable funding trying to accomplish? What is the money going to go toward? How will Iowan's benefit? The result is a table of brainstormed ideas and results that sustainable funding could achieve (below).

The subcommittee, also, reiterated and identified specific points of interest the full committee has touched on in previous meetings of what would be affected by implementing natural resources sustainable funding, which should be considered further in conveying information to the public and legislators:

business opportunities	quality of life	economic growth
keep Iowa dollars in Iowa	improve Iowa's tourism	world class trail system

The ultimate goal of all the programs and vehicles is to enhance and protect our natural resources allowing the current generation to enjoy and preserve Iowa's resources and leave a legacy for future generations. In short, the all encompassing idea of the measurable and immeasurable benefits of natural resources sustainable funding is to: protect the nature of Iowa.

Natural Resource Category	What's going to be done?	Identified funding vehicle to help achieve this?
<b>PARKS AND TRAILS</b>		
Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- improve county/city park infrastructure</li> <li>- create a grade-A system of state and local parks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- shelter houses</li> <li>- trails</li> <li>- campgrounds</li> <li>- shelters</li> <li>- beaches</li> <li>- water accesses</li> <li>- destination sites to draw people from other states</li> </ul> </li> <li>- increase recreational opportunities with the goal of providing every Iowan a place to go for outdoor recreation within ½ hour of their home</li> </ul>	REAP LCPP Lake Restoration IA DNR Trails
Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- create a trail system that will serve all Iowans</li> </ul>	REAP LCPP IA DNR Trails
<b>SOIL AND WATER</b>		
Soil (conservation practices)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- terraces</li> <li>- waterway buffers</li> <li>- wetlands</li> <li>- grade stabilization structures (ie ponds)</li> <li>- advocate farming practices</li> <li>- conservation tillage</li> <li>- demonstrate innovative methods (soil saving techniques, nutrient management)</li> </ul>	WIRB Lake Restoration IDALS REAP LCPP IA DNR
Water (quality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- apply strategies to targeted watershed efforts</li> <li>- reduce sediment</li> <li>- create/build federal, state, and local partnerships</li> <li>- help communities problem solve water issues</li> <li>- provide incentives to implement quality improvement programs and efforts</li> </ul>	REAP WIRB Lake Restoration IDALS IA DNR LCPP
<b>FISH, WILDLIFE, NATURAL AREAS</b>		
Fish, Wildlife, Natural Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- protect and improve the status of Iowa's wildlife</li> <li>- provide safe homes for endangered species in Iowa</li> <li>- make Iowa's lakes and streams great places to go fishing</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- provide places for people to see wildlife (ie improve wildlife viewing opportunities)</li> <li>- increase opportunities to enjoy Iowa's outdoors</li> <li>- protect Iowa's natural heritage</li> <li>- Iowans will have access to natural areas – rural and urban</li> <li>- creation and protection of access to natural areas</li> <li>- improve hunting and fishing opportunities and access in Iowans – rural and urban</li> <li>- improve and manage prairies, forests, and woodland resources</li> <li>- provide assistance to landowners to establish / manage forestry base</li> <li>- manage Iowa's natural resources</li> <li>- provide proactive options and quality management against invasive species</li> </ul>	REAP LCPP WIRB Lake Restoration IA DNR IDALS Trails
ALL 3 CATEGORIES: PARKS/TRAILS, SOIL/WATER, FISH/WILDLIFE/NATURAL AREAS		
Parks/Trails Soil/Water Fish/Wildlife/Natural Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- provide quality engaging and significant environmental and conservation education opportunities for the public, private landowners, and community leaders</li> <li>- Establish, strengthen, and maintain nature centers and naturalist programs</li> <li>- Educate and encourage private landowners toward productive and innovative land and water management techniques</li> <li>- Train developers and community leaders on conservation and environmentally friendly principles toward Iowa's resources</li> <li>- Initiate proactive outreach and interpretive programs</li> </ul>	REAP LCPP IA DNR IDALS

Committee Comments/Questions:

Question: Were wetlands left out of fish/wildlife/natural areas on purpose?

No – Kim will add wetlands

Question: Re LCPP, on the original Funding Needs/Funding Vehicles table, see it is redefined as Local COUNTY Partnership Program. It had been CONSERVATION.

Typo – Kim will correct to LOCAL CONSERVATION PARTERSHIP PROGRAM.

Comment: This table may be useful for the polling people and for the report

**Discussion and Identification of Funding Mechanisms viability to fulfill Funding Vehicle/Funding Needs – Duane Sand / Full Committee**

Duane presented information on funding mechanisms the committee was looking for more information on: Financed Land Acquisitions/Capital Improvements, State Income Tax Credits for Conservation Lands Protections, Gasoline Tax Environmental Protection Charge (re UST), Water Use Permit Fees, and Vehicle Use Fees. The benefits and challenges of each topic were discussed and debated, as well as their anticipated revenue generating ability.

After discussion, the committee voted on which of the funding mechanisms they felt the public should be surveyed on as revenue generating viable options. The 5 funding mechanisms to focus on during the survey with the public would not be the only ones the committee will consider and/or explore further. They are to help guide the survey contractor in their polling questions:

- Gaming / Gambling
- Sales Tax Increase
- Sales Tax on Lottery Tickets
- Tax Incentive / Credit for Conservation
- Bonding

The following are mechanisms the committee discussed but chose as low or non-priority topics regarding asking the public in the survey:

UST – No, will not generate the funds needed and revenue growth not anticipated.

Severance Tax on Water Permit – Pending, will consider further.

Sales Tax on Bottle Water – Pending, will consider further.

Severance Tax on All Energy Producers – No

Real Estate Transfer Fund – No, takes funds from general fund.

Storm Water Run-Off - No

Recreation Vehicle Registration – Pending, will consider further.

Excise on Recreational Purchases – No

Existing Sales Tax – Pending, will consider further.

Gas Tax – No

User Fees – Pending, will consider further.

### **Communication – Doug Harr**

#### **How to get Legislators Informed?**

It was commented that an article was expected to come out in the Des Moines Register this week about sustainable funding.

Representative Whitaker responded that it needs to be explained to each caucus. He also recommended a report, 2 pgs or less, be provided for legislator review. Representative Whitaker will plan on sending out ICN info to the 2000+ households in his district tomorrow.

Mary Braun noted that planning caucuses will be held in December to determine priorities. It might be good to have some awareness then. Mary reported she has informed those on her end regarding the 11/09/06 ICN meeting.

Representative Rayhons suggested that the CCBs may want to inform legislators, also.

Emailing the legislators was not recommended.

Deb Kozel suggested that subcommittee meetings can be informed about sustainable funding via a brief report.

Diane Ford-Shivvers recommended spokespersons from the committee to attend/present at those meetings.

### **ICN Public Information and Input Meeting: Format Discussion – Full Committee**

The committee was informed two new sites were added due to public input and population review of the map: Dubuque and Spirit Lake. The committee discussed the locations and requested 3 more sites be added in the following areas: Creston, Centerville, and Cedar Rapids. Kim will research and set these up.

The committee discussed a representative for the committee to facilitate the 11/09/06 ICN meeting. Rich Leopold was nominated and accepted. Each committee member available will attend ICN sites near their home vicinity.

The ICN timeframe and logistics were discussed. After a brief introduction to the process, Rich will lead each site to have the committee members introduce themselves and who they represent, and to acknowledge any other legislative members attending. Due to the ICN timeframe (7p-9p) and 14 sites, it was determined each site would get about 6 minutes of public speaking time and it would be done on a rotational protocol. All comments, even if given verbally, will be requested be submitted in writing. Each person at each site will be directed to sign in. It was recommended a handout be created: 1 page on the funding vehicles/funding needs and 1 page on funding mechanism. Based on the information created and the last two SF meetings, a document could be created from those, plus provide background on the committee's work. Kim will work on putting that together. It was determined that this was a meeting to inform the public of the committee's work and to get the public's input. The committee, also, requested the session be video taped if possible.

The committee was informed the acceptance of online and mailed in comments has been extended from 11/09/06 to 11/17/06.

### **Subcommittee Needs**

- \* Peter will be contacting and working with the Polling/Survey Subcommittee regarding preliminary work on the survey questions. Meetings will be held by phone and/or E-mail, unless they determine otherwise.

After the subcommittee has finalized their questions, they will be sent electronically to the full committee for their review.

- \* Jim Zohrer will be contacting and working with the Report Preparation Subcommittee regarding report needs and input. Subcommittee members are: Mark Ackelson, Duane Sand, Tammi Kircher, Representative John Whitaker, and Deb Kozel.

### **Next Meeting Date and Location**

December 11, 2006

Location – To Be Determined